to the end of Dhanu. Bonds executed by the sureties of the borrowers of these loans have been exempted from the payment of stamp duty, and applications for loans up to a limit of Rs. 200 have been similarly exempted from the payment of court fees.

12. Irrigation and Drainage.—The work of the special officer appointed for expediting the conversion of dry lands into wet within the area commanded by the Kodayar channels was completed by the close of 1097. As a result of his exertions, an extent of 323 acres of dry land was converted into wet within that area, and a further extent of 453 acres already converted into wet was brought to book. The special officer has submitted certain schemes for the opening of distributary channels in the upper reaches of the commanded area, and for the utilisation of the surplus and seepage water that now runs waste into the sea for the benefit of lands at the tail-end, and the Government look up to the Land Revenue and the Public Works Departments to investigate these schemes and devise measures for utilising this water to the fullest extent.

13. You may remember that the Irrigation Regulation, III of 1072, was recently revised so as to admit of the formation of boards for entrusting to popular agencies some of the functions contemplated by that Regulation. The Rules for the formation of such boards, which were promised in paragraph 7 of my Address last year, have now been issued, and the preliminary steps for the creation of Irrigation Boards in the Kodayar area are in progress. A Central Board is to be constituted for the area commanded by the Kodayar channels, together with a block board for each of the 107 blocks comprised thereunder. The Dewan Peishkar and the Executive Engineer will be the President and the Vice-President, respectively, of the Central Board, while the remaining 13 members of that board will all be elected non-officials, each representing one of the 13 groups into which the irrigation blocks are divided. Every block board will be composed of not less than 5 and not more than 7 members—all elected—one of whom will be the President of that board. The Central Board is empowered to make recommendations regarding the dates of opening and closing the Kodayar reservoir and channels, the supply of water to the several major tanks and channels, the distribution of water among the several blocks, the measures calculated to bring the maximum extent of land under cultivation within the commanded area, and all matters generally tending to enhance the utility and successful working of irrigation under the Kodayar Scheme. The block boards in their turn will see that the water received by the respective blocks is fairly and equitably distributed, advise the ryots as to the crops to be grown with reference to the time and quantity of the supply of water, maintain the field distributaries in repair, and also improve and extend them, instruct the ryots not to encroach upon or tamper with irrigation works, and attend generally to all other matters that may be necessary for ensuring the successful irrigation of the block. Government trust that the effective system of local self-government in the matter of irrigation in the Kodayar area now to be inaugurated would be a source of all-round and far-reaching benefit to the ryots of that area and enable them to realise in full the manifold advantages to be derived from the project.

14. A sum of Rs. 68,500 was allotted for minor irrigation works in 1097, and that allotment has been further raised to Rs. 84,400 during the current year. The vexed question of the respective responsibilities of the State and the *ayakatdar* in regard to the restoration and maintenance of minor irrigation works in Nanjanad and Edanad has now been finally solved. So far as the improvement of minor irrigation works in the Vilavankod and Neyyattinkara taluks is concerned, Rules 2 and 3 of the Rules issued under the Irrigation Regulation are being amended, so as to enable the Government to recover one-half of the cost of restoration payable by the ryots interested, free of interest and in ten annual instalments commencing from the first day of the official year succeeding that on which the work is completed. The subsequent maintenance of the works so repaired will, of course, rest with the ryots concerned under Section 13 of the Irrigation Regulation, and to render this maintenance effective, Irrigation Boards will be created as in the case of South

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Travancore. The restoration and repair of minor irrigation works in the taluks of Tovala and Agastisvaram and the area comprising the old taluks of Eraniel and Kalkulam will, however, be done at the sole cost of the Government in conformity with past usage. In regard to the Trivandrum taluk, a committee has been appointed to examine the condition of minor irrigation works in the taluk, suggest the works to be undertaken and the order of their urgency, consider the cost of such works, and propose measures for securing the co-operation of the people concerned to the fullest extent possible.

15. The constitution of Irrigation Boards for the pumping of water from, and the regulation of cultivation on, *punja* lands in Central and North Travancore is under correspondence with the Land Revenue Commissioner. That officer proposes to hold a meeting of the ryots interested and Government hope to receive his final report on the matter at an early date. A preliminary investigation, by the Public Works Department, of the feasibility of utilising the water of the Sastamkotta fresh water lake for irrigational purposes is in progress. As regards the Adirappalli Project which was referred to in my last year's Address, Government regret to have to say that its execution is held up by certain objections raised by the Cochin Government.

16. As promised in paragraph 9 of my Address last year, I inspected the Kallada valley and the flood banks of the Kallada river in Tulam last, in company with the Chief Engineer. While it is realised that the best remedy for averting the inundation of this valley is the boring of a tunnel through the side-ridge separating the valley from the Ashtamudi backwater, it is proposed, before undertaking this costly project, to try the cheaper expedient of setting back the flood banks of the river and repairing the breaches and other damages so far caused, and then watch the effect of these works. An estimate has already been sanctioned for closing the breaches on the eastern bank of the river, while another estimate is under preparation for repairing the damages to the western bank.

17. A further examination of the question of giving one of the engineering officers of the State special training in agricultural engineering has disclosed that no such special training is necessary so far as the handling of drainage problems is concerned, as the success of that work depends upon the general engineering qualifications and the local experience of the officer concerned, in regard to both of which the regular engineering staff of the P. W. D. is sufficiently well-equipped. The necessity for giving special training in agricultural engineering, in the generally understood sense of that term, *viz.*, in engineering connected with the improvement of mechanical appliances used in agriculture, has also been obviated by the recent employment, as Agricultural Engineer, of the State scholar, Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon, who has received such training in the course of his foreign studies.

18. Economic Development Board.—This Board, which is composed of 20 members, of whom 14 are non-officials, has held 7 meetings since its formation. The Board has been empowered to deal with all questions of policy relating to the working of the Development Departments irrespective of any reference from outside, thus giving it considerable scope for initiative. Among the problems which have engaged the attention of the Board, special mention should be made of the extension of paddy cultivation, the manufacture of scientific manures, the formation of agricultural colonies, the improvement of minor irrigation, the utilisation of hydro-electric power for the improvement of industries, the promotion of banking facilities, the development of the co-operative movement, and the organisation of fresh cottage and other industries. All the recommendations of the Board are engaging the careful attention of the Government.

19. Agriculture.—The work of the Agricultural Department has continued to show satisfactory progress. The grant for this department, which stood at Rs. ·95 lakhs in 1094, has been increased to Rs. 2·322 lakhs during the current year. Experiments on paddy continued to be conducted in the paddy farm at Tiruppatisaram for the discovery of the cheapest and most effective manure for paddy lands in South Travancore, and of early varieties of paddy for

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly